

CHAPTER IX

|say-tell them I'm terribly sorry, least know. Elise emerged, cool in pastel will you?"

chiffons, under a huge hat. Her "Yes, sir," said Chiltern. "Will for an answer. "You see. I can't dark, rather heavy eyes were veil- you be coming home for dinner?" beg. lure, or even abduct you to my they saying?" ed as they rested on him. They "Yes?" said Mark loudly. He felt apartment. I can't think what "They're talking about you, dar- 'After all, the child is very young. made him vaguely uncomfortable. his voice would banish the faint you're afraid of--" This was his frequent reaction to fear that seized him at the ques- "Perhaps it isn't excactly fear," you could bring an attractive doesn't seem quite playing the

He wished ridiculously that he "I see, sir," said Chiltern a trifle to the tongues of men-to rabbit out of a hat, and put her t's only for Valerie. I'm just a could take a running jump into his "Thank you." car and be off, waving his hat as Mark almost suspected he really know. And even if one doesn't go nobody would talk about it?"

looked, and hew even midsummer He said "Thank you," and went "You're just talking off the top mean—are you by any chance tell- The name is Tredway," he said. She laid her hand on his arm, and started his car. The wind lift- "Keeping me on the outside. Just "Who else? Really, Mark, I ad- he said it that made Elise jump. and looked up at him reproach-ed the light brim of Elise's enor-as if we hadn't been friends for mit your right to do as you please. fully. "Don't go conventional, darl mous hat, and she caught it closer. ages. It isn't fair—when I miss But after all, you're over ten—" know what an imbecile I am about would never get used to "darling" with a chauffeur and three closed as the current output in saluta- cars driving himself to work in a tions. "I'm quite sure what your two-year-old roadster, like any opinion is of women who pursue laborer. It was difficult to look men to their offices. But how else out from under a shadowy brim am I to see you? And I truly must, with lustrous eyes, when that brim Will you drive me home? Oh Har- surged and billowed in playful mon, just take the car back. I leaps that kept both her hands at shan't be needing it again until her head.

Finally, as a stronger gust tilted Mark almost put out a protest- it coyly over one ear, she took the ing hand, as the man touched his thing off entirely, anchoring it cap and drove off. Elise was mov-firmly on her knees, and thanking ing flowingly toward his roadster, heaven for a hair net. She was and there was nothing to do but struggling with a rage that includ-

"I don't think you'll be very her he had nothing to do with it. happy," he said opening the door. The last straw was when she look-"Picture hats and chiffons don't ed up and found him laughing. mix specially well with roadsters." Men seldom laughed with, and She tucked her flowing skirts never at, Elise,

around her and leaned back with a "Sorry-but you should have wistful sigh. "But I adore roads- seen yourself," said Mark. "I ters. And you have the top up, so I mean, the way you looked when shan't be too terribly windblown. we started, and the way you look-Don't stand there staring at me, ed after a couple of bouts with the

Mark brought his thoughts back Elise managed a kind of smile. with an effort. "I just remember- "It must have been terribly fun- one hand from the still struggling distinctly disturbing. ed-A telephone call. Excuse me ny," she agreed.

a second. I'll be with you-" "I suppose you're wondering bit of chiffon. He was halfway up the walk be- why I've carried you off," she said. "I-I'm frightfully sorry. I'm les out of thin air, "I'll never grow fore she could answer. He felt She had almost mastered her tem-probably a clumsy brute—" He up!" he declared. "I never at my childishly defrauded as he called per.

his house from the superinten- Mark was not quite so success- hat, and held it closely. dent's office. He had hardly realiz- ful at hiding his curiosity over the | Elise looked up at him from un- salary to tutor my daughter-" ed how he counted on the hour in whole proceeding. "Of course—it dampened lashes. She even smiled Elise again laid her hand on his the pool with Valerie and Lucy, was sweet of you-" he began. He was glad when he heard Chilt- "I simply had to see you. And "No, darling," she sighed "It's were thinking twice before throw-wouldn't come in and share my ern's voice. Sometimes if Valerie it's practically impossible to get just that you don't always think, ing it off, like the boy she accused dinner. I was going to the Weighthappened to be passing when the you to myself even for a minute. Of course, I know you can't go him of being.

Miss Valerie I've been detained, stimulating—if you know what I ing to see me! As a matter of fact, this is an adult age." and to have their swim without mean."

"I'm afraid I don't understand," ed it.

back to Elise. He got in beside her of your mind," said Elise sadly, ing me—that Lucy Tredway—"



"Come over sometime," he grinned.

Ellen so ar yway—" She stopped, a little frightened at Mark was horrified, after the what she had said. She had never fashion of men, to see her loose seen Mark angry before. It was

hat and wipe her eyes on a gay "If people are over ten before they begin to make up rotten storlaid his hand over hers on the big worst moments imagined anything like this! A young woman paid a

plaintively. arm. The arm quivered, as if he me," she sighed. I suppose you

telephone rang she answered, just Of course, I simply adore Valerie, dashing around to parties. Amus- "Dear heart," she purred, "please know how I'd love to cut it—for as you know. And Miss Treadle is ing yourself like that. But surely don't bark at me. After all, I you-" "Please tell Miss Tredway and -well, of course she's quite- nobody could criticize you for com- haven't done anything. After all, Mark could have laughed. He it's criticism that made me hunt "I'm darned if what you say had seen through Elise. Never Mark nodded. He didn't in the you up. It's terribly hard to tell sounds like it! Well—go on—you again would intangible uneasiness

you. You are so-so sort of sweet, might just as well tell me all there fill him because of her or her great making him miss his swim. Mark. But when others are involvis of it." Mark asked a surreptitions ques- Elise.

tion of his wrist watch. He was ap- Mark was staring at the horpalled to find only half an hour izon. His face was quite cold. She had passed since Elise met him. began to be very much afraid. It seemed to him that he had been Perhaps the idea was not so clever shut up here with her for weeks. as it had seemed when she invent-

know is talking about somebody? you're not being quite fair to Va-about this—and now—" She hurried on without waiting They generally are, aren't they? lerie." Watching him closely, she "And now," said Mark pleasant- would know the difference. By the welcome to attend. Who is it this time, and what are could see that the shot went home. ly, "run along in and catch up on time she turned at the door, Mark The meeting of the Williams-

ling, of course. Did you imagine and susceptible to impressions. It he explained. "Maybe I'm catering young woman from nowhere, like a game to let people gossip. Of course say nothing of women. Silly rot, I unchaperoned into your house, and ittle afraid nobody is bothering a much longer she intended standing he went. Instead, he found him-did see. He would not have put it in for stereotyped mourning, it, Mark drew up by the side of the Mark turned on her like a man forgive her, suddenly, for the

> There was something in the way names! The point is, well—she she doesn't seem to be so terribly popular with the few people who

have met her." "I wonder if it keeps her awake nights. She's popular with Valerie and after all, that's what she's at Wide Acres for. The child has been ! made over new since Lucy came. I hardly know her. And that makes her popular with me. Lucy. 1 mean. Damned popular, if you want to know!" Elise grew suddenly cold. "But.

of course, if you're in love with er, darling-" The words were hardly cold beore she knew what a fatal mistake they were. She gathered up her courage and looked at him. His face was far from reassuring. "Why do you women always imagine a man must be in love?" he asked. "Anyway, count me out

Absolutely." Elise tried not to read anything more into it than just the bare words. But his emphasis on "absolutely" was a bit terrifying. She looked cut and saw with astonish-

at her side, she faced him with "I suppose you'll never forgive

was riding a wave of freedom. He

dark eyes or her subtle perfume. "Good-bye--" She tried to put "There isn't any more," said "I'm afraid not tonight," he said. heartbreak into it, and loneliness. You see, I must be getting home

Mark turned as if on a released spring, and held out his hand. Elise chose one more from her bag of tricks. "Are you furious "If you're not afraid of our rewith me," managed what sounded faintly like a sob. "I suppose it's what we must expect where we try | Eeal tears sprang to her eyes. | held Saturday in Zion Church,

and the roadster had vanished.

To Be Continued)

"You're--angry-" "Not a bit. Why on earth should | I be?" Tossing off the whole thing as if it were less than nothing. does curtail social activities a bit." road and stared at her. "Do you who has suddenly had enough. whole silly business. Even for

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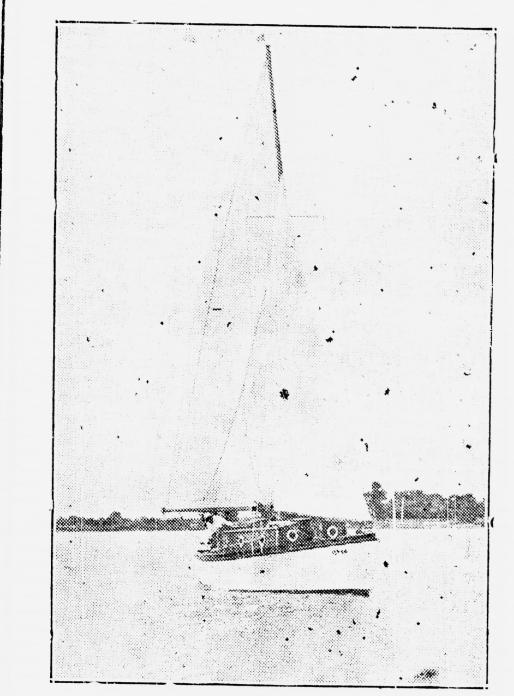
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At a recent meeting of the Williamsburg 4-H Club girls, arrangements were made to attend the 4H Club banquet, to be

he told her. "I suppose it's stupid "All I mean is," she went on ed awake night trying to decide walked up to the house. She was The banquet will be held from a provided to the house of the start of the house of t of me. Do you mean somebody we rather sadly "people seem to think whether or not I should tell you afraid he would see the tears. 6:00 to 9:00 P. M. and all 4-H. They were of rage, and even a man girls and others interested are

> burg elub was presided over by Lucinda Holloway, president.

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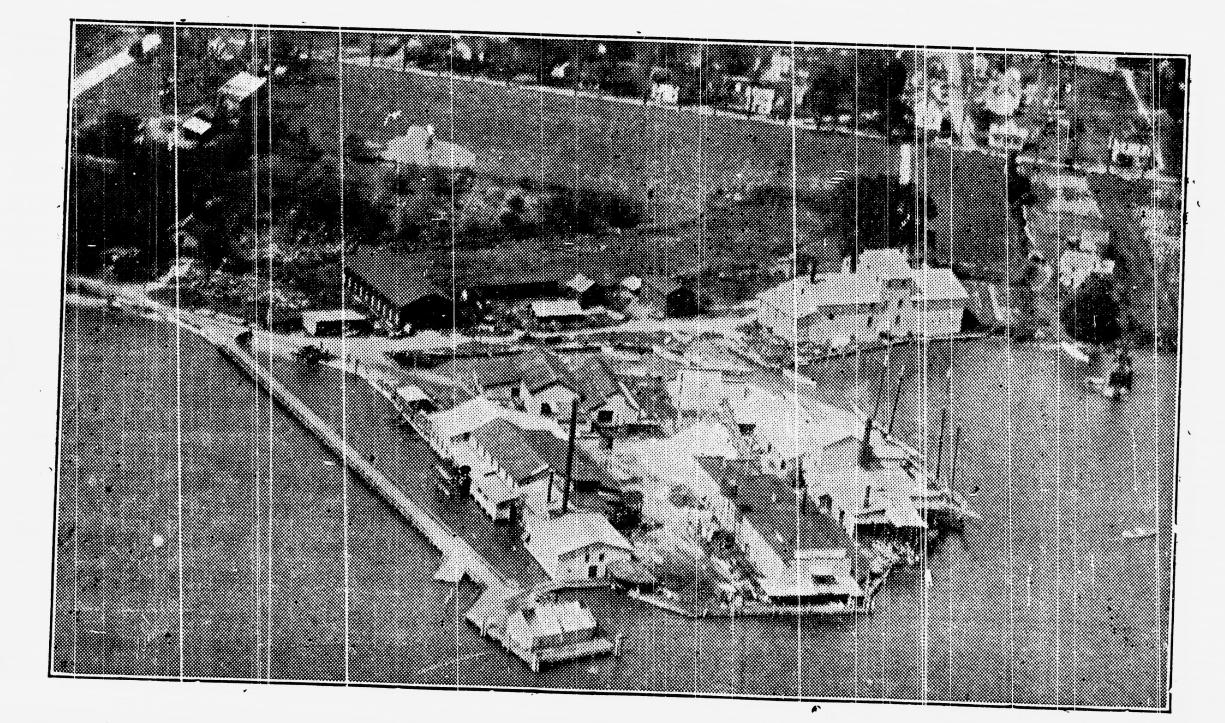
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